

# Public Health Response to Aliso Canyon Natural Gas Leak



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# Background

- Aliso Canyon gas leak discovered by Southern California Gas Company on October 23
- Natural gas emissions estimated at 50,000 kilograms per hour (2,640,000 lbs. per day)
- Public Health notified October 28; participated in first community meeting on November 4

# Health perspective of two primary components of natural gas emissions

Methane: No inhalation hazard expected in this setting. No fire or explosion hazard at current air concentrations per County Fire and AQMD. Daily monitoring by agencies.

Mercaptans: Present at very low levels (below detection limit of instruments); human nose can detect much lower levels.

# Exposure to Mercaptans

- Daily air concentrations far below danger thresholds, but exposures are affecting some residents (agencies continuing to receive daily complaints).
- Health effects include nausea, stomach discomfort, dizziness, headache, and respiratory problems (expected to recur daily, as long as exposure remains).
- No long-term or permanent health effects expected.

# Public Health Directive of 11/19/15

- So Cal Gas *"should continue the abatement process...on an expedited basis...citing public health as the highest priority."*
- So Cal Gas *"is to offer free, temporary, relocation to any area residents affected by odors from the Aliso Canyon site."*
- Basis for directive: Initially, repairs estimated to be completed in days; recent estimates suggest solution could take months.



# Public Health Perspective

- Mandatory relocation not required; temporary relocation to be offered to those affected.
- Temporary relief to affected residents is warranted, based on health effects experienced and extended time necessary for repairs.

# What this means to the community

- Affected residents will get relief while gas leak is repaired.
- Residents who are able to tolerate odors and do not wish to leave their homes, will remain.
- Residents encouraged to continue to register complaints with Public Health and AQMD.